GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
LABOUR
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1683
ANSWERED ON:02.08.2000
AMENDMENTS IN ACTS
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Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to make comprehensive amendments in the Industrial Disputes Act, Payment of Compensation Act, Payment of Bonus Act and Trade Union Act keeping in view the economic liberalisation in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of labourers working in an Un-organised sector;

(d) whether these workers are being provided all facilities which are provided to the labourer working in the organised sector; and

(e) if not, the action proposed to be taken by the Government to safeguard the interests of the labours of Un-organised sector, especially of those who are in agriculture sector?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI MUNI LALL)

(a) & (b): Review/updation of labour laws is a continuous process and amendments/fresh legislations are made depending on the results of the review. A number of labour laws have been framed over a period of time to address a number of issues and problems that assumed importance and attracted pointed attention at a particular point of time. While many of these concerns are of continuing nature, some of them have ceased to be of erstwhile importance and may have indeed become obsolete and redundant. There is thus always a need to review comprehensively the labour laws so as to ensure both consistency of labour laws with the general changes taking place in the economic policy and also to provide for greater welfare of the workers. The Government have also set up the Second National Commission on 15.10.1999 which would comprehensively review the labour laws and suggest appropriate changes in the labour legislation/policy. The Commission would suggest rationalisation of existing labour laws relating to labour in the organised sector and an umbrella legislation for ensuring a minimum level of protection to the workers in the unorganised sectors.

(c) to (e): According to 1991 Census, out of 286 million main workers, there were 259 million workers in unorganised sector constituting about 91% of the total workforce. A number of labour laws have been enacted to improve the conditions of labourers including those in informal sector. Some of these Labour Laws are: The Minimum Wage Act, 1948; the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976; the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976;the Beedi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966; the Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act, 1970;the Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972; the Beedi Workers Welfare Fund Act, 1976; the Inter-State Migrant Workmen(Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979; the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditionsof Service) Act, 1996; and the Building and Other Construction Workers` Welfare Cess Act, 1996etc. Workers engaged in iron ore, manganese ore, chrome ore, limestone, dolomite and mica mines, cine industry and beedi industry are also covered by the various welfare programmes undertaken under the concerned welfare funds. State Government have also launched insurance and social security schemes covering a large number of workers engaged in specific activities like handloom weaving, rickshaw pulling etc. The Government are also implementing a number of schemes like Jawahar Rojgar Yojna (JRY), Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS)etc. for the welfare and improvement of the conditions of rural unorganised informal labourers in the country. A new programme known as `Swarnjayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojna` (SGSY) has been launched from April, 1999 by amalgamating existing schemes viz. IRDP, TRYSEM,DWCRA etc. The Government proposes to enact a comprehensive Central legislation for agricultural workers which, inter-alia, provide for certain welfare/ social security measures, including health care, maternity benefit, old age pension, children`s education, housing, immediate assistance to the family of agricultural workers in case of death or injury etc.